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Conservation Commission Minutes 02/08/2012

Arlington Conservation Commission
 Minutes
 February 8, 2012

Mr. Stevens called the meeting to order at 8 a.m. in the first floor conference room of the Town Hall Annex. Present were Nathaniel Stevens, Chris Naylor, Curt Connors, Michelle Durocher, and Charles Tirone and of the Commission.

David White, Catherine Garnett, and Eileen Coleman of the Commission did not attend. Also present were DPW Director Mike Rademacher, P.E., David E. Varga, P.E. from BSC Group, Mark DiOrio, Esq. from Bulfinch Companies, Anne Thompson and Elsie Fiore, residents of East Arlington.

8am– **Discussion** – Discovery Park, CLOMR report for FEMA

The purpose of the meeting was to consult with Mr. Rademacher, to review the Project, the CLOMR application and the data submitted in support it, which DPW was prepared to approve on the Town's behalf by the February 10 deadline set by FEMA. At the previous Commission meeting, several members had requested an opportunity to consult with Mr. Rademacher and the Applicant's technical personnel. All parties involved agreed to make time for the consultation, which residents could also attend.

Mr. Varga began with a brief outline of the development, mostly in Cambridge, with a small sliver of land in Arlington.

The proponents have a 15 year "master plan" for 6 buildings and two parking garages. No buildings will be located south of Acorn Park Drive except for a sanitary sewage pump station which will eventually owned/operated by the City of Cambridge. The development must be constructed with a net flood storage at all stages of construction. This is accomplished with basement level flood storage chambers underneath the buildings.

The Town of Arlington is reviewing the CLOMR application to FEMA due to the addition of regulatory floodway on the new 2010 FEMA flood maps. The Mr. Varga stated that the hydrology of the Alewife system is complicated and makes the designation of the peak discharge/peak elevation complicated with the Mystic River peak preventing outflows from this system. As He stated that as a result the Alewife Brook has two peak flows/peak elevations. The latest models for this system utilize unsteady state flowing conditions, which more accurately characterize this phenomenon, although traditional FEMA practice is to utilize "steady" flow conditions. The overall elevation of the floodplain is decreased with the full build out of the Discovery Park project, by a very minor amount of 0.01 feet.

Mr. Varga outlined the consultants involved with the Discovery Park development. Bulfinch Companies are the developers, represented by Mr. DiOrio, representing. BSC Group is the general site engineer, represented by David Varga representing. AECOM (former ENSR) is the hydrologic consultant, who drafted the CLOMR, represented by Sarah Widing (now at VHB) representing.

The City of Cambridge reviewed the 2010 FEMA Flood maps and study (generated by AECOM), at that time they hired SEA to review/independently verify the model and it was found satisfactory.

FEMA also has an independent internal review, called STARR, represented by Chelsea Green, who works for CDM.

Her three reviews of the CLOMR are included in the document. Ms. Beckwith made copies of these reviews for those present at the meeting.

Ms. Thompson asked why the calculations in the CLOMR showed higher or lower elevations, depending on which model was used, and depending on whether the currently built structures were in place. She asked if it wouldn't be prudent to have interim calculations done along the way. Mr. Vargas explained that the CLOMR uses the full build out condition, the end point, to show that no impact will occur. Otherwise, it's segmenting the project.

Mr. Rademacher outlined his review of the CLOMR and stating that he was comfortable with the CLOMR, having clarifying clarified the information with Sarah Widing.

Ms. Fiore asked if any of this development was going to help Arlington. Mr. DiOrio said that yes, and that any deviations in the approved designs are submitted to the Cambridge authorities for review.

Mr. Tirone expressed concern about operation and maintenance of the underground storage areas, and their inspections.

Mr. Stevens asked the board to share their thoughts.

Mr. Connors stated that, based on the detailed data presented and explained by Mr. Varga, the review and due diligence performed by Mr. Rademacher on behalf of the Town, the comments of residents, and especially the fact that independent peer reviews of the CLOMR had been conducted by SEA and CDM, there seemed no technical basis to oppose Mr. Rademacher's intention to approve the CLOMR. The other Commission members present concurred with that assessment, however, no vote was taken, as this was a meeting to review information with DPW, which would itself issue any approval..was satisfied with the review of the CLOMR and its results and that the narrow regulatory review by FEMA for the peaks are unfortunate.

Mr. Naylor, Mr. Tirone and Ms. Durocher all concurred.

Meeting adjourned at 9:48am.

Respectfully submitted,
Corinna Beckwith
Commission Administrator